

TO THE HONORABLE THE SENATE AND
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA

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Monongahela Navigation Company,
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THIS BOOK PRESENTED BY

A. E. Braun



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To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the
Congress of the United States of America.

The Memorial of the President and Managers of the Monongahela Navigation Company, respectfully represents:

That your memorialists are a corporation existing by virtue of a Charter of the State of Pennsylvania, for the purpose of creating a slackwater navigation on the Monongahela River, by locks and dams, and privileged by their franchises to charge toll for the use of their said improvement.

That they are advised that a petition was presented to Congress by the Chamber of Commerce of the City of Pittsburg, in said State, praying that Congress will take such action, looking to the purchase of the works of said company, as will at once secure the navigation of the Monongahela River free to all persons desiring to use its waters, and that on presentation of said memorial to the House of Representatives, the same was referred to the Committee on Rivers and Harbors.

Believing that such action on the part of the United States Government would be unjust and injurious to your memorialists, and without corresponding benefits to the public, they beg leave to present to your Honorable bodies a brief statement of certain facts in reply to the petition of the Pittsburg Chamber of Commerce, and of the right of the said Monongahela Navigation Company to be left in the undisturbed enjoyment of the rights and franchises, lawfully granted to them by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Therefore, your memorialists respectfully represent.

That in the year 1836 the Legislature of said State authorized the Governor to incorporate a company to make a lock

navigation on the River Monongahela, between Pittsburg and the Virginia State line, a distance of 96 miles.

That said company was organized in the year 1836 and received a charter in accordance with the provisions of said Act, and proceeded to make said slackwater navigation by the construction of locks and dams, and have accordingly constructed seven dams and ten cut stone locks on said river, which with the lock and dam No. 8, now in progress of erection by the United States Government, create a slackwater navigation on the Monongahela River to the boundary line between the States of Virginia and Pennsylvania.

That the works of said company are located entirely within the State of Pennsylvania.

That prior to the construction of said improvement the Monongahela River was not navigable for steamboats, or for boats laden with coal or other freight, excepting in times of the occurrence of high freshets in the river, and that for the greater part of the year the water in said river was too low for the navigation of such craft.

That the chief purpose of said improvement was the creation of a navigable water way for boats laden with coal mined on the lands bounding on said river, and that previous to the construction of said improvement, the average amount of coal floated over said river did not exceed 29,000 tons a year, and that chiefly from coal works situate within a few miles of the City of Pittsburg.

That said company in December, 1839 put two locks and dams under contract, which were completed in Oct. 1841. That in July 1840, they put Locks and Dams Nos. 3 and 4 under contract, and in November, 1844, slackwater navigation was completed to Brownsville, a distance of 55 miles from Pittsburg. That in January, 1854, they commenced the erection of Locks and Dams Nos. 5 and 6, and in December, 1881, the seventh lock and dam was contracted for. That all these locks and dams were constructed, and have been kept in complete repair, and are now in excellent condition. That the said locks vary in capacity of lock chamber from 50 to 56 feet in width, and from

190 to 300 feet in length, being constructed in all cases with special reference to the boats used in the coal trade, and for their convenient and speedy passage. That as the coal trade rapidly increased the company erected a second lock at Dam No. 1 in 1847, at Dam No. 2 in 1852, and at Dam No. 3 in 1882, and that they are now under contract for the erection of a second lock at Dam No. 4. That said duplicate locks are of larger capacity than the first set of locks built by the company, for the purpose of meeting the tendency of the coal men to increase the size of their boats. So far from it being true that the works of this company are inferior in size and capacity and antiquated in construction, we claim to have the grandest slackwater improvement in the United States, which is in excellent condition, and fully equal to all the requirements of the coal trade and other business of the river; and that this company have in the past and intend in the future to enlarge their lockage capacity whenever and as soon as required by the anticipated wants of the freightage of the river.

That the lockage accommodation is amply sufficient for the present business of the river, as is evident from the fact that two and a half million bushels or 95,000 tons of coal have been passed through the locks at Dam No. 1, nearest to Pittsburgh, in one day of 24 hours, and at an ordinary stage of water. This will be readily understood when it is explained that the Ohio River is not navigable excepting in times of flood. Consequently a large fleet of coal boats will accumulate in the first pool of the Monongahela slackwater above Lock No. 1 awaiting a rise in the Ohio, because when the Ohio is low there is not water enough below the lock to permit of the boats harboring there. But when a rise occurs the boats which have been gathering for months have to be passed through the locks at No. 1 in a few days. The difficulty is greatly increased by the crowding of the coal boats around the entrance of the locks, in violation of the regulations of the company, which prevents the passage of boats in the order of their arrival at the locks. This difficulty will be entirely removed when the Davis Island Dam, on the Ohio River, built by the U. S. Gov-

ernment, is completed and in operation, as it will raise the water in the harbor of Pittsburg sufficiently to permit boats laden with coal to pass through Lock No. 1 at all times, and await, below the Monongahela slackwater, a rise in the Ohio sufficient to enable them to pass down that stream.

TOLLS.

The allegation of the petition of the Chamber of Commerce that the tolls charged by the company are excessive, and amount to an export tax, is not founded on fact.

The tolls charged by the Monongahela Navigation Co. are extremely low, far lower than those on any similar improvement in the United States, as appears by the following comparative statement:

The tolls charged on the Louisville and Portland Canal in the year 1839, amounted to 60 cents per ton, or $2\frac{28}{100}$ cents per bushel.

The tolls on coal now charged on the

	Per Ton.	Per Bushel.
Lchigh Canal, - - - are	$81\frac{13}{100}$ cents,	or $3\frac{8}{100}$ cents.
Schuylkill Canal, - - - “	$33\frac{18}{100}$	“ $1\frac{26}{100}$ “
Pennsylvania Canal, - - - “	$28\frac{22}{100}$	“ $1\frac{7}{100}$ “
Tide Water Canal, - - - “	$27\frac{77}{100}$	“ $1\frac{5}{100}$ “
Green & Barren Rivers, Ky., “	$25\frac{20}{100}$	“ $\frac{96}{100}$ “
Muskingum Lock Nav., - - - “	$20\frac{81}{100}$	“ $\frac{79}{100}$ “
Monongahela Navigation Co., “	$4\frac{56}{100}$	“ $\frac{17}{100}$ “

The above is in each case for a distance of 56 miles.

But as over one-half of the coal (52 per cent.) comes from the first and second pools, the actual rate of toll is considerably less, inasmuch as coal from pool No. 1 pays only $2\frac{3}{4}$ cents per ton, and from pool No 2 only $4\frac{3}{4}$ cents per ton, and the toll on slack is only one-half the above rates.

This toll forms so inconsiderable a proportion to the value of the article that it certainly cannot be regarded as a tax on the commerce of the Ohio River.

EFFECTS OF FREE TOLL ON KANAWHA RIVER.

The small toll charged by this company on coal does no injury to the coal interests of the Monongahela valley by reason

of the free toll on the Kanawha River, for the simple reason that the Kanawha coal is of a different quality and does not command as high a price as the Pittsburg coal, the difference being at least 1 cent per bushel, or 27 cents per ton in favor of the Pittsburg coal, leaving so large a margin over the charge for toll as to make any competition arising therefrom entirely out of the question.

Your memorialists further represent to your Honorable bodies that the purchase of the Monongahela slack water improvement is not demanded by the public interest. The price of coal at Pittsburg and at other points on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers is not in any way affected by the trifling amount of toll charged by this company, as is manifest from the fact that the Monongahela slackwater is not the only avenue for coal from Western Pennsylvania, and that the price of coal at Cincinnati and other points on the Ohio varies very greatly at different times, ranging from \$1.50 to \$3.00 per ton.

That the request for the purchase by the Government of the works of this company is made in the interest of a few individuals is clear, when the fact is made known that more than nine tenths of the coal which passes over this improvement is shipped from the coal works of only ten or a dozen firms or individuals.

The trifling interest which the citizens of West Virginia have in this matter is also apparent from the fact that only one-eighth of one per cent. of all the coal passing through our locks comes from above the fourth pool, and none at all from West Virginia, and that the total tolls received during last year, at all the locks above Lock No. 4, was only about $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the total amount of tolls received. When, therefore, it is considered that bituminous coal is sold by the bushel, it is utterly improbable that the effect of relieving the coal owners of the payment of tolls amounting to $\frac{1.7}{100}$ of a cent a bushel would in any way benefit the public by reducing the price of coal; and as it appears from the statement of the petitioners, as well as from this memorial, that this company derives its chief revenues from the toll on coal, it is manifest that the govern-

ment is asked to expend a large sum of money in the purchase of this improvement, and to incur an annual expenditure of over one hundred thousand dollars for expenses and repairs in operating and keeping up the locks and dams in their present condition, for the pecuniary benefit of a few individuals engaged in a particular line of business.

This company has always anticipated the wants of the trade over their improvement by expending money liberally in construction of new works, even before they were necessary. This they did because they foresaw the immense increase of the coal trade which would result from the construction of their improvement. It is alleged that they have made no improvement at Dam No. 1 since 1848. That was the year in which they constructed the second lock at that dam. Their reason for building a second lock at that time was not that it was then necessary for the passage of coal boats, but because the rapid increase of coal production showed that it would be required in a few years, and especially because a leak in the bottom of the then only lock at that point could not be repaired without closing the navigation for a long time. So they deferred the necessary repair until they had built a second lock. They have also, since that date, applied machinery for the opening and closing of the lock gates and for pulling boats in and out of the locks, which so greatly increases the rapidity of lockage as to enable coal boats to be passed through the lock in one-half the time formerly required, so that the facilities afforded for passage of boats at Lock No. 1 are now double what they were in the year 1848.

This company has, since 1881, expended over \$453,000 in building a new dam, two new locks and other necessary construction; and they have also another new lock under contract. Since the opening of the improvement they have expended considerably over \$800,000 in repairs, and they spare neither pains nor money to maintain and increase the efficiency of the improvement.

This improvement has conferred great benefits on the public, not only in affording the means of bringing the coal of the Monongahela valley to market, and furnishing that neces-

sary article to points on the Mississippi and its tributaries, which are now almost entirely dependent therefor on this market, but it has enriched the owners of real estate on the Monongahela River by increasing the value of their lands from ten to twenty times what it was before this improvement was commenced. For many years the stockholders received no dividends on their capital stock, as it was not until the year 1853 that they declared their first dividend. The company also pays a large amount of taxes annually, of which the State of Pennsylvania would be deprived if the works of this company passed into the hands of the United States.

Owing to the excellent character of the improvement and its supposed permanence the stock of this company is regarded as a valuable and safe investment, and is largely held by decedents estates, by women who rely on the increase thus derived for their support, and by trustees and guardians.

Your memorialists trust that your Honorable bodies will not seek to deprive them of the valuable franchise which they hold by charter from the State of Pennsylvania, by taking from them their property and franchises, which they have ever used for the promotion of the material wealth and business interests of the public.

M. K. MOORHEAD,
President Mon. Nav. Co.

W. BAKEWELL,
Sec. and Treas. Mon. Nav. Co.

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